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AUTHOR Brooks, Glenwood C., Jr.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

An anonymous poll assessing attitudes and demographic variables associated with interracial contact was administered to 1,391 University of Maryland students. Responses of whites (84%), blacks (4%), Orientals (1%) and Spanish surname students are compared and discussed. Some American Indian, black, Spanish surname, white and Oriental students felt that most whites were racist, while more American Indians, Spanish surname, white, Oriental and blacks felt most blacks were racist. Only 9% of all students disagreed that it would be enjoyable to have a roommate of another race. Generally speaking, the more friends of another race blacks had, the more comfortable they felt with someone of another race, the less they felt whites were racist, the more likely they would marry someone of another race, and the less they felt their mothers were bigoted. However, among whites, having more friends of another race only related to feeling more comfortable with other races. (Author/HS)

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Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr., William E. Sedlacek
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SUMMARY

An anonymous poll assessing attitudes and demographic variables associated with interracial contact was administered to 1391 University of Maryland, College Park, students. Responses of whites (84%), blacks (4%), Orientals (1%) and Spanish surname students were compared and discussed. Some American Indian (38%), black (35%), Spanish surname (33%), white (27%) and Oriental (9%) students felt that most whites were racist, while some American Indians (50%), Spanish surname (33%), white (32%), Oriental (26%) and blacks (18%) felt most blacks were racist. Only 9% of all students disagreed that it would be enjoyable to have a roommate of another race with American Indians disagreeing most (38%) and Orientals disagreeing least (4%). Generally speaking, the more friends of another race blacks had, the more comfortable they felt with someone of another race, the less they felt whites were racist, the more likely they would marry someone of another race, and the less they felt their mothers were bigoted. However, among whites having more friends of another race only related to feeling more comfortable with other races.

The writers suggest that parallel black and white cultures exist on campus with the resulting casual contact unlikely to change initial stereotypes. Sustained long term contact in a positive context will likely be required before attitude changes are likely to occur.

INTERRACIAL CONTACT AND ATTITUDES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Recent studies at the College Park campus of the University of Maryland have shown that white college students have negative attitudes toward blacks (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972). However, the attitudes of blacks toward whites or the possible demographic and ideological factors which underlie black-white differences or differences among other cultural and racial groups at the University of Maryland are largely unknown.

Amir (1969) provided an excellent review of interracial contact and interracial attitude variables and concluded that the racial attitudes of one ethnic group toward another are based on the circumstances of the situation. Moreover, Pettigrew (1969) indicated that the effects of contact between ethnic persons was *limited* to the *particular* situation. Studies of psychological variables such as familiarity, attraction, social perception, similarity of beliefs, of values, etc., among persons of different ethnic groups are some of the directions of research in interracial contact. Sociological studies, particularly the construct of marginality, have provided an explanation of the existing differences among cultural groups. Blacks as a group, experience a different acculturation process from whites, i.e., blacks experience more discrimination in the American society than do whites (Merton, 1957). Rose (1969) however stressed that all minority persons are not "maladjusted products of cultural ambivalence but rather adjusted participants in a marginal culture, itself the product of accommodation to differential treatment" (p. 126).

In view of the literature, black and white students at the University might be viewed as reflecting a sort of cultural parallelism. We know that the University of Maryland is viewed quite differently by black and white students. Blacks tend to view the University as racist while whites do not (DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972; Landry and Sedlacek, 1972). As a matter of fact,

black students who viewed the University as racist did not drop out as often as black students who responded differently. The cultural parallelism between black and white students is also reflected by the racially homogeneous feeder schools to the University and corresponding racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Of course, differences between black and white university students are apparently formulated *prior* to attending the University. And while many studies of college students suggest that change toward being more flexible and open-minded occurs over four years (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969), such change is not specific to interracial contact and interracial attitudes. However, freshman students might differ from sophomore students and so on, over the four year period, and examination of these differences might indicate in part the impact the University has in providing a diverse student context.

The purpose of the current study was to explore attitude and background variables that relate to interracial and intercultural relations on campus.

Method

In the summer and fall of 1971, an anonymous poll was administered to 1391 full time undergraduate students at the College Park campus of the University of Maryland during registration. The poll consisted of demographic and attitude items (see Appendix).

Of the 1391 students; 54 (4%) were black; 23 (2%) were Oriental; 16 (1%) were American Indians; and 9 (1%) were Spanish surnamed. 1170 (84%) students were labeled as "other" and presumably were nearly all white and will be so called throughout this report. Eight percent did not indicate race. The total sample was 48% male and 50% female with 2% not indicating sex. Forty-seven percent were freshmen, 22% were sophomores, 21% were juniors and 8% were seniors with 2% not reporting class. Of the 54 blacks, 28 were male and 26 female. For comparison

purposes a sample of 56 whites (29 males and 27 females) was chosen.

Data were analyzed descriptively with means, standard deviations and percentages, and using analysis of variance, chi square and Pearson correlation.

Results

Percent Responses

Thirty-nine percent (N=257) of the freshmen indicated that they had no close friends of another race (item 6), 12% (N=82) indicated one friend, 13% (N=86) indicated two, 7% (N=42) three, and 28% (N=188) four or more. One percent (N=5) did not respond to item 6 (see Appendix). Sophomore, junior and senior patterns of response to item 6 were very similar to freshman in that they either reported having no friends of another race or four or more friends of another race. Black, Spanish surname, American Indian and white student patterns of response corresponded with the above while Oriental students generally reported having four or more friends of another race. Students who had not indicated their race showed a pattern of responses corresponding to the student majority.

Most of the black students (72%, N=49) reported having spent most of their life in the city, whereas the other four groups indicated the suburbs (item 7). Black, Spanish surname, American Indian and white students indicated that the majority racial composition of their neighborhood was of their own, whereas Oriental students indicated very few of their neighbors were members of their own race (item 8). Only a minority of the students among the groups described their parents' attitudes toward other races as intolerant or bigoted (items 10 [8%] and 11 [4%]).

Some American Indian (25%), Spanish surname (22%), Oriental (17%), white (13%) and black (7%) students agreed that "Blacks are getting too much in the

society these days" (item 12). Some American Indian (38%), black (35%), Spanish surname (33%), white (27%) and Oriental (9%) students felt that "Most whites are racist" (item 14). The percent of each group who felt "Most blacks are racist" (item 15) were American Indian (50%), Spanish surname (33%), white (32%), Oriental (26%) and black (18%).

Only 9% (median) of the students among the five groups disagreed that it would be enjoyable having a roommate of another race. American Indian students disagreed the most (38%) and Oriental students disagreed the least (4%), (item 16). Oriental (74%), black (59%), Spanish surname (44%), white (33%) and American Indian (31%) students felt that they would date someone of another race (item 17). As for marrying someone of another race, many Oriental (52%), Spanish surname (44%), black (39%), American Indian (19%) and white (19%) students indicated that they would (item 18).

Almost two-thirds (63% median) of all groups felt that the society must integrate if it is to survive.

Analysis of Variance

The following analysis is based on 2X2 (Race: white or black; Sex: male or female) analysis of variance (fixed effects model - .05 level) for a sample of black students (N=54), and a random sample of whites (N=56).

White students tended to have two friends of another race and black students three friends of another race (item 6). No sex differences were found nor any interaction of Race with Sex.

White students estimated their family income to range from $10,001 to $20,000 whereas blacks estimated their family income to range from $8,001 to $10,000 (item 4). No Sex differences or interaction of Race with Sex occurred.

Also, white students reported that the racial composition of their neighborhood was about 90% to 100% "my race" and blacks reported 75% to 90% "my race" (item 8). No Sex differences or interaction of Race with Sex occurred.

When black and white students were asked if they ever had had a teacher of another race, the effects of Race, Sex and the interaction of Race with Sex were significant (item 9). White females reported having a teacher of another race a few times ($\bar{x}$=2.85), while white males reported having a teacher of another race only about once ($\bar{x}$=1.91). Both black females ($\bar{x}$=4.55) and males ($\bar{x}$=4.50) reported similarly; having had a teacher of another race a number of times to regularly.

White students tended to disagree that "Blacks are getting too much in the society these days" but blacks disagreed even more strongly (item 12). No Sex or interaction of Race with Sex differences occurred. To the question "Are most blacks racist?" white males and females tended to respond neutrally ($\bar{x}$=3.04 and $\bar{x}$=3.00 respectively), while black males ($\bar{x}$=3.39) and females ($\bar{x}$=3.64) disagreed with the statement. No Sex differences or interaction of Race with Sex occurred.

Chi Square Analysis

Items 5 and 7, "Where will you be living this semester?" and "In what kind of area have you spent most of your life?" are categorical items. The chi square statistic (i.e., a 2x8 and a 2x4 respectively) was used to determine significance between white and black samples and no significant differences were found.

Pearson Correlations

A Pearson-Product Moment Correlation was performed on all continuous items, dropping the responses of "Unknown" or "Other" from the analysis. A coefficient (r) of .27 was required for significance at the .05 level with 50 degrees of freedom.

Freshman and sophomore black students tended to describe the racial attitude of their parents as more positive than did black juniors and seniors (item 3 with 10, r=.28; and 3 with 11, r=.30). The higher the family income of the black students, the more bigoted they felt their fathers to be (4 with 10, r=.32). Generally speaking, the more friends of another race blacks had, the more comfortable they felt with someone of another race (6 with 13, r=.44), the less they felt whites were racist (6 with 14, r=.31), the more likely they would marry someone of another race (6 with 18, r=-.33), and the less they felt their mothers were bigoted. The less bigoted blacks felt their parents were, the more comfortable they felt with someone of another race (10 with 13, r=-.32; 11 with 13, r=-.30). Perceived racial attitudes of black parents were intercorrelated (10 with 11, r=.53).

The more teachers of another race blacks have had, the less likely they were to enjoy a roommate of another race (9 with 16, r=.28).

Fewer significant relationships between interracial contact and interracial attitudes among whites occurred as among blacks, but some differences did occur. For example, white females were more likely to have had a teacher of another race than white males (2 with 9, r=.32). Also, those who had had a teacher of another race tended to disagree with the statement that "Blacks are getting too much in the society these days" (9 with 12, r=-.30), felt comfortable with someone of another race (9 with 13, r=.28), but disagreed that "Society must integrate if it is to survive"(9 with 19, r=.34). Also, those whites with more friends of another race tended to feel more comfortable with other races (6 with 13, r=.30). Also, the higher the estimated family income of white students, the less enjoyable it would be to have a roommate of another race (4 with 16, r=.27). White parents' racial attitudes were highly intercorrelated (10 with 11, r=.70).

Discussion

The bimodal nature of the distribution of the student groups (except Orientals) regarding the number of friends of another race was quite evident. Students either had many friends (four or more) of another race or they had no friends of another race. This was true of freshman students on through to senior students. All other groups reported having more friends of another race than did whites. The sheer number of white students would suggest this, however. The polar condition regarding the number of friends of another race is exacerbated by income and neighborhood racial composition differences. Campbell's (1971) findings that blacks tend to have more white friends than whites have black friends is congruent with the findings of this study and while tremendous polarity continues to exist, he reports some reduction has occurred since 1964, i.e., "...the number of people of both races who count their friends exclusively within their own race has declined..." (p.146).

Parental racial attitudes as reported by black and white students were highly intercorrelated but the sphere of racial attitudes of black parents appeared greater for black students than white parents for white students. Whereas ever having had a teacher of another race had a greater influence on white students than on black students. As a matter of fact, the only significant interaction of Race with Sex occurred on this item.

Superficiality of contact with members of the same cultural group might preclude familiarity, nevertheless members assume similarity of ideology (beliefs and values), whereas in interracial contact there has been less of a basis for the assumption of similarity of ideology. Even when members of other cultural groups are found to be similar, racial attitudes toward such persons might preclude equal acceptance of them. Stein, Hardyck and Smith (1965) reported that

teenagers described as Negroes were viewed less positively than undescribed teenagers. Longer contact over longer periods, not to the extent of absorption of different cultural values, but rather to the extent of relaxing tensions so that demographic and ideological differences might be examined more positively, seems warranted. In the university student culture, competition on looks, clothes, sociability, classroom work, etc., act as intervening variables which retard or exacerbate the effect of race. Byrne and Wong (1962) have shown that when blacks and whites perceive one another as having similar beliefs both respond favorably toward one another in the work setting. The social distance of the work setting, however, does not necessarily generalize to other settings. For example, "the diffusion of black people into occupational situations which they were earlier denied presumably has increased contact with white people on the job, *however* (writers' insertion), communities in the cities are practically all-black enclaves in which it is possible for black people to live, work and shop with virtually no contact with white people" (Campbell, 1971; p.142). Interracial contact is sharply minimized in situations which require intimate contact. Triandis, Davis and Takezawa (1965) and Sedlacek and Brooks (1972) found, for example, that the effect of race is greatest in intimate situations, i.e., dating, marriage, etc. Thus, shorter periods of little intimate interracial contact such as an occasional meeting in the classroom, a talk with the professor, a discussion on human relations, are likely to cause the initially hostile to remain hostile and the friendly to remain friendly. McGuire (1969) reports that there is "some evidence that long maintained contact produces a secular trend toward increased favorableness" (p.225). The longer-maintained interracial contact would increase the likelihood that demographic and ideological differences among student racial or cultural groups would be approached more openly and positively.

Campbell (1971) reported "The one general characteristic of the white population which is dramatically related to racial orientation is college education. The educational system our respondents passed through had relatively little effect on their attitudes regarding race if they went no further than high school" (p.157). But, in counting the number of campus situations which might permit long termed interracial contact, the only viable one is that of students having a roommate of another race. Just living in the same dormitory might mean little interaction with other students, let alone students of another race. But the limitation exists here too that even under optimal conditions the cross racial acceptance of roommates generated by contact might not generalize to other settings. Situations off campus such as visits to roommates' homes might not even be approached.

Most students in all groups felt the society must integrate if it is to survive. While the definition was not stated, it is likely that many students were referring to a pluralistic society where racial or cultural groups live together under large social distances (avoidance of certain situations). In this context, the more intimate types of social contact (living next door, dating, marriage to a person of another race) may not be included.

In conclusion, it appears that a sort of cultural parallelism exists among blacks, whites, and presumably the other three student groups, although sample sizes did not permit complete analyses. The differences are quite clear on the demographic and ideological factors. Sustained interracial contact in all probability will increase positive approaches of one group to another, but will not necessarily generalize the effect of positive racial attitudes to new or different situations. The University should encourage students to accept roommates of another race, particularly in view of the fact that the feeling exists among the student racial or cultural groups that this would be enjoyable.

The University should encourage, however contradictory as it may seem, cultural or racial student groups, i.e., Black Student Union, Oriental student groups, etc. Blacks in particular have felt the need for their own organizations in order to provide a sense of cultural identity and values. Interestingly, of the four minority cultural groups in this study it is the Orientals who have achieved the greatest degree of integration in the American society, due in part to their sense of cultural identity and values. Cultural parallelism, therefore, is not viewed as a negative group phenomenon, and conversely integration is not an anachromism, although these are somewhat antithetical to one another and will probably remain so for some time.

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APPENDIX

ANONYMOUS POLL NUMBER I.

(This questionnaire is anonymous. Do not sign your name. Hand in separately.)

In order to reach solutions to problems on and off campus, opinions and information are needed. Results will be widely disseminated. Please circle or mark your responses ON THIS SHEET.

Please circle your responses to the first eleven items.

1. The racial or ethnic group to which I belong is:
   1. Black
   2. Oriental
   3. Spanish surname
   4. American Indian
   5. All other
   6. Decline to answer

2. My sex is: M (1) F (2)

3. My classification at the University is:
   1. Freshman
   2. Sophomore
   3. Junior
   4. Senior
   5. Other

4. My family income (estimate of your family's YEARLY income):
   1. $ 4,000 or less
   2. $ 4,001 to $ 6,000
   3. $ 6,001 to $ 8,000
   4. $ 8,001 to $ 10,000
   5. $ 10,001 to $ 20,000
   6. $ 20,001 to $ 30,000
   7. Over $30,000
   8. Unknown
   9. Other

5. Where will you be living this semester?
   1. Parents' or guardian's home
   2. Other relative's home
   3. Off campus room
   4. Rent, own or share an apt.
   5. Fraternity or sorority house
   6. University dormitory
   7. Veteran's family unit
   8. Own or rent a house
   9. Other

6. How many CLOSE friends of another race do you have?
   1. None
   2. One
   3. Two
   4. Three
   5. Four or more

7. In what kind of area have you spent most of your life?
   1. City
   2. Suburb
   3. Small town
   4. Rural area or farm

8. How would you describe the racial composition of the neighborhood you chose in question 7?
   1. Nearly 100% my race
   2. 90-100% my race
   3. 75-90% my race
   4. 50-75% my race
   5. 25-50% my race
   6. 5-25% my race
   7. My family about the only members of my race in the neighborhood.

9. Have you ever had a teacher of another race?
   1. Never
   2. Once
   3. A few times
   4. A number of times
   5. Regularly

10. How would you describe the attitude of your father (guardian) toward other races?
    1. Very positive
    2. Somewhat positive
    3. Tolerant
    4. Intolerant
    5. Bigoted

11. How would you describe the attitude of your mother (guardian) toward other races?
    1. Very positive
    2. Somewhat positive
    3. Tolerant
    4. Intolerant
    5. Bigoted

WRITE ON! MORE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Anonymous Poll Numbe 1.

Please use the scale below in responding to the following items. Write in your responses to the right of each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Use any number between 1 and 5 to indicate your feelings.

	Response
12. Blacks are getting too much in the society these days.	_____
13. I DO NOT feel comfortable with someone of another race.	_____
14. Most whites are racist.	_____
15. Most blacks are racist.	_____
16. I would enjoy having a roommate of another race.	_____
17. I would date someone of another race.	_____
18. I would marry someone of another race.	_____
19. The society must integrate if it is to survive.	_____

Thank you for your time!

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